



January 2006

AWIN Monthly Newsletter

Welcome...

...to the the monthly newsletter for the Arkansas Wireless Information Network, also known as AWIN. AWIN is a multi-phased approach to building the infrastructure for a statewide interoperable radio system. It will be used by first responders of all types across the state. As we move toward this new level of communication, we will continue to keep you informed of the progress.

AWIN Support

In partnership with the Arkansas State Police, the Department of Information Systems (DIS) operates the AWIN Call Center to support all AWIN subscribers (radio users) with technical assistance or AWIN-related requests. Technicians are on call in the event of any emergency. Call (501) 682-HELP (682-4357) or toll-free (800) 435-7989 or e-mail: awin.support@arkansas.gov

The DIS professionals who provide support for AWIN have fielded 182 customer requests to date.

AWIN system operates state-wide

With the completion of the cutovers in Area C and G, the entire state system is now operating on the AWIN digital radio system. These two remaining analog areas of the state were completed in the last few days, and are now part of the AWIN system.

Technicians converted six towers in Area G in just three days, and the work was complete by Friday January 13th. The cutover in Area C was complete as of Friday January 20th. Five towers in that area were converted to the AWIN system.

AWIN program management is thrilled with the completion of the troop cutovers, and is excited to move on to the next phase of implementation of the new digital radio system.



Union County Sheriff Ken Jones

"We have 80% of our radios installed. The system is working great! A Shift Supervisor talked to the prisoner transport van in Batesville from El Dorado this morning. Way to Go!!"

System expansion

As more users are added to the AWIN radio system, the network will be experiencing some much needed expansion. There are two pieces to the expansion process, and the augmentation will be implemented in stages.

The first stage of the system expansion is adding a second Smart Zone Controller at the Department of Information Systems (DIS), located in the State Capitol area. The initial controller located at Arkansas State Police Headquarters in southwest Little Rock has almost reached capacity. As more users join the system, additional capacity will be needed. A second controller will balance the load of users as well. Initial preparations have begun to add

the second controller at DIS. The controller will be housed in a secure climate controlled environment at the agency.

The second piece to the system expansion is the enhancement of the existing microwave infrastructure. Towers across the state will be connected in order to route radio traffic effectively, and balance the load of users more efficiently. It will also reduce the amount of calls that might be dropped.

The first stage of the system expansion is scheduled to be completed by the beginning of May 2006. The second phase is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

Emergency alarms

With recent concerns over the use of emergency buttons on the AWIN radios, the AWIN Local Leadership Council has approved disabling the emergency buttons on Command and Control radios. It became increasingly obvious in recent weeks that there was some confusion by users about the use of the emergency buttons, and whether or not the emergency alarms that were sent were recognized.

At this point, the emergency buttons will be disabled on all radios that are still in the process of being programmed. Previously deployed AWIN radios, will

still have the capability of sending emergency alarms. In upcoming months, AWIN radios will have to be reprogrammed for the re-banding effort in the state. At that time, the emergency buttons on every AWIN radio will be disabled.

It is extremely important that the user is aware of whether or not the talk group they are on is monitored by a dispatch center with a console. If they are not on a monitored talk group, the alarm sent by the emergency button will not be recognized.

Send us your story

Do you have a story you would like to share with other end users? Any advice you want to pass along to agencies that are awaiting a cutover in their area? We want to know how AWIN is working for you! Please send your comments to awin@arkansas.gov.



---Coming Events & Reminders-----Coming Events & Reminders---



Training to begin soon

Command and Control training for counties will begin next month. Trainers with the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management expect to begin the training sessions in February.

The training will include the technical aspects of using the radios, when to use the AWIN radios, and Incident Command System (ICS) training.

Watch your AWIN newsletters for more information about Command and Control training dates and times!



Arkansas Wireless Information Network

One Capitol Mall

P.O. Box 3155

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203